



Letterneck

13th MEU's Family Gram

Aug. 25, 2000

13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)

Vol. 2, No. 1

CO eyes 'vision' for 13th MEU(SOC)

by Sgt. Matthew C. Miller

What does the commander of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) think about right after he leaves for a six-month Western Pacific deployment?

Colonel Christopher J. Gunther's mind is set on Australia, but liberty is not at the forefront. The 13th MEU(SOC)'s 48-year-old commander is excited about being the first "tip of the spear" unit to conduct sustainment training "down under."

"MEU(SOC)s don't get the opportunity to train with several weapon systems before they get to the (Arabian) Gulf," said Col. Gunther. "Now we have the chance to retain our proficiency with the howitzers, tanks and other long-range weapons we don't have room to train with at other stops on the way."

When a MEU(SOC) deploys, it has to conform to the training rules and regulations of the various countries it stops in. Most of the countries in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific don't have room to fire long-range weapons. That usually hinders the operational readiness of the deployed unit. By the time they get to the Gulf, they have a lot of catching up to do.

"For any deployed MEU(SOC), readiness is usually the biggest concern," said the veteran of five deployments and 26 years in the Marine Corps. "We have the opportunity to alleviate some of that concern. Hopefully this will be something the other MEU(SOC)s will follow and continue to train there."

"My personal mission is to be 100 percent ready to answer the 911 call, should it come. Past deployment experiences tell me that we need to be ready to perform any of

the MEU(SOC) missions we have been perfecting for the past six months."

When he was told many Marines think action follows Col. Gunther wherever he goes, he chuckled. "Wherever MEU(SOC)s go, action seems to follow, and if my record shows what we should expect, then we should expect to stay busy," he said.

Colonel Gunther participated in several operations, such as in Grenada, Lebanon, Bosnia and Liberia. His decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, three Navy Commendation Medals (one with a combat V), two Navy Achievement Medals and three Combat Action Ribbons.

A Marine's Marine, Col. Gunther doesn't hesitate to ask Marines how their

please see VISION, Page 7



SSgt. Stephen Gude

Sergeant Dustin Herzog, 25, from Choteau, Mt., leads a fire team along a line of buildings.

A Battery hits the 'town'

by SSgt. Stephen Gude

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii --As soon as 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) arrived at Pearl harbor Aug. 21, the MEU's artillery battery hit the town.

Thing is, it wasn't Waikiki.

Instead, the Marines from A Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines arrived here to a town known less for partying and more for urban warfare. They conducted sustainment training at the Military Operations in Urban Terrain facility here, practicing the techniques they need to stay proficient as 13th MEU(SOC)'s non-lethal force.

And what a place to practice. One could reasonably place the MOUT town in a scenario -- perhaps it was a prosperous little city

at one time, as two vintage Mercedes cars sat wrecked on its main street. Two hotels faced a "business center," but the only business going on is now being conducted by A Battery.

"We practiced room clearing, crossing rooms, entering buildings and the sort of things we need to know to be effective as the security force," said Capt. Louis Palazzo, the battery's commanding officer.

"Clearing buildings is not really our specialty," said 30-year-old SSgt. David McColgan, the Weapons Platoon sergeant from Cape May, N.J. "But in the role we serve in the MEU, conducting this type of training helps us brush up on our skills."

In the morning, under a cloud cover in-

please see ALPHA, Page 3

Third shot at board a charm for MSSG Marine

by Sgt. M.C. Miller

When it came to a meritorious promotion board, the third time was the charm for a military policeman with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).



Sgt. Trevon Gray

Sergeant Trevon Gray, a 21-year-old native of Newburgh, N.Y., and platoon sergeant with MEU Service Support Group 13, was recently meritoriously promoted from a 1st Force Service Support Group Meritorious Sergeant board.

He considers this a major accomplishment, because discipline is one of the main reasons he joined the Corps. His military career began with a meritorious promotion to Private First Class in boot camp and his discipline and dedication to

duty continues with every passing day.

Sergeant Gray said he plans on continuing the trend of excellence in the Marine Corps by reenlisting and changing jobs by joining the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. This will help him when he eventually leaves the Corps to become an Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent.

Having been on two boards in the past – Meritorious Corporal and Marine of the Quarter – and missed winning by one place on each board, he was eager to break the streak with this test of leadership. In the Meritorious Sergeant Board, he placed second out of eleven Marines.

During the board, each candidate had to complete and excel in several events. They were inspected in their Service A and C uniforms, then graded on drill manual. Board members also judged how well the Marines gave a military class during the Technical Military Instruction portion of the board.

The last test, which Sergeant Gray considered the hardest, was the oral board.

“We had to walk into a room with perfect bearing and all of a sudden we were facing 10 sergeants major,” Sergeant Gray said. “It was really an intimidating sight. Then we had to answer a question from each while being as professional and attentive as possible the whole time.”

Coming into the board, Sergeant Gray was the most qualified Marine from MSSG-13, said 1st Lt. Johnny Gutierrez, military police detachment commander. He is an expert rifle and pistol shooter and boasts a first-class 283 score for the physical fitness test.

Since he was on the other boards, he also knew what to expect and who else would do well on within the candidate pool. “When I first went on the board, I felt I was only in real competition with about five other Marines,” said Gray. “When I saw them I noticed (the rest) were really undisciplined and lacked leadership ability I had attained.”

The board members also reviewed each Marine’s service record book, looking for clues into the leadership traits and principles each Marine possessed, such as:

*** Be technically and tactically proficient.**

“Sergeant Gray always knows what needs to be done and almost never has to be told,” said Cpl. Bret Uhlig, a 22-year-old military policeman from Vernal, Utah. “He may be told every once in a while, but it is usually not necessary.”

*** Know yourself and seek self-improvement.**

“He is always trying hard to improve himself in every aspect,” 1st Lt. Gutierrez said. “He is always asking questions and trying to learn more.”

please see GRAY, Page 7

MEU Message Board

From 13th MEU(SOC) CO

I know that the next six months will be difficult for the families of the Marines and Sailors. Just like it will be hard for us out here to be away from home. There is going to be a void that even e-mail and letters won’t be able to fill. We will try to use the web page to keep you abreast of what we are doing out here.

Please support your Key Volunteers and use them as your principle source of information during the deployment. We will be using them to pass vital information

about operations and where we are in the world. Key Volunteers are your link to the MEU.

Thanks to everyone who took part in the Dependent’s Cruise. I am sure it was a memorable day for everyone.



Col. C.J. Gunther

Sergeant Maj. Senecal’s words of wisdom

As 13th MEU(SOC) pulled away from the pier at Naval Station San Diego, with hundreds of family members and friends there to see us away, I couldn’t help but think to myself, “The hard part is over.”

That is, the hard part is over for us. Deploying for a WestPac is the kind of adventure most Marines signed up for — seeing exotic foreign lands, enjoying the camaraderie and good training opportunities and the entire aura of being a “soldier of the sea.”

But for the family members, the hard part has just begun.

Whether it’s taking care of emergency situations, financial matters, automobile maintenance, child care issues or any of the myriad situations that come up during daily life, a large part of the family support system – the Marine or the Sailor of the MEU – is not there.

Remember though – we have not forgotten you. There are support systems in place, from 13th MEU(SOC) Key Wives to Family Advocacy on base, you can call on to render assistance or

please see SGTMAJ, Page 3

A Battery

from page 1

terspersed with blue sky and the sun peeking through, Sgt. Erik Lew, 26, of Watsonville, Calif., took one platoon, while Cpl. Alex Quintero, a 25-year-old from El Paso, took the other. Lew and Quintero, A Battery's MOUT instructors, began teaching methods of entry into buildings, setting up security for Marines entering buildings, and clearing rooms.

Quintero's subjects used a two-story building that looked like an apartment complex or a small school. Even if it wasn't a school, Quintero turned it into one, showing the Marines several methods of entering through windows, which gave way to a spirited competition to see which fire team could enter the building quickest.

Techniques varied from one Marines using the heel lift to hoist the other Marines up to two Marines grasping another's boot heels and literally hurling him through the window. The smacks of elbows and knees meeting hard concrete was clearly heard throughout the training as the Marines refined their technique and continued to enter

quicker and quicker.

Comments from Quintero, platoon sergeants, squad leaders and the battery gunnery sergeant helped this refinement.

"Use the wall to support yourself!"

"Put your weapon up! You're supposed to be rear security!"

"Don't just run up to the wall! Give him some room."

Entrance times began at around 30 seconds, dropping to 24, then 21, 18 and finally to 15 seconds. But Palazzo and his Marines could see that with the lowered times, form was starting to fall off.

"Speed is not as important as getting into the room correctly, ready to take whatever action necessary," he said.

Lance Cpl. Anthony Parker, 22, from Seaside, Calif., whose fire team entered in 16 seconds, felt his fire team entered the way Quintero intended.

"I think the main purpose is getting in there with everyone ready, taking out the en-

emy and making sure all our Marines come out alive," he said.

"There was a little bit of pride involved in getting the fastest time," said 26-year-old

Sgt. Adam Doty, a Boston native. His team set the 15 second time. "When we went in, my Marines had the security set and we were ready to get into it."

"They didn't look too bad," McColgan said. "They were a little rusty, but eventually got into it and looked better as time went on."

Later, the Marines learned how to clear rooms and then went into a force-on-force, with each platoon having an opportunity to go on the offense and defense. After the force-on-force, they went into training to provide security for a non-combatant evacuation operation or humanitarian assistance operation and techniques of crowd control.

"The Marines looked pretty good for this being the first time they've done a lot of this," Quintero said. "And like we all know, the more you practice, the better you get."

'The more you practice, the better you get.'

Cpl. Alex Quintero, A Battery, 1/11



SSgt. Stephen Gude

'Get some!'

Lance Cpl. James King, 22, of Grand Rapids, Mich., prepares to fire an M-240G machine gun from a rooftop during a force-on-force exercise at a Military Operations in Urban Terrain facility at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. King's unit, A Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, are currently deployed with 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), and trained at the MOUT facility in the first training conducted during the MEU's six-month deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf.

Sergeant Major

from page 2

have questions answered. You'll see news about your Marine or Sailor from sources like this newsletter, in The Scout and on 13th MEU(SOC)'s website, at www.usmc.mil/13meu. And if you have access to the Internet, as many of you do, you can e-mail your Marine or Sailor.

There may be some places where it will be impossible to e-mail because of operational security, but remember the post office? In this day and age, a lot of people have forgotten how to write letters. Send your Marine or Sailor letters and care packages as often as you can. This deployment may be an adventure to us, but any time a Marine or Sailor gets something from home, you have just made his or her day – if not his or her week.

My final piece of advice to family members is not to sit and watch the clock, waiting for your warrior from the sea to come home. I know six months can seem like a long time, but if you're busy, doing different things and with short-term goals to accomplish, you'll wonder where all the time went. Before you know it, we'll be home.

Find 13th MEU(SOC) on the internet at
www.usmc.mil/13meu

Command Element Scoop

S-1 Administration

With San Diego in the rearview mirror and the deployment underway, the administrators in the consolidated 13th MEU(SOC) Admin Office are conducting business as usual. A lot of hard work and planning went into the consolidation of the personnel and general admin functions for the command element and its subordinate units into a finely tuned, cohesive team.

For the benefit of my readers a little background information: the Marine Corps has been consolidating admin for the past three years and it is now 13th MEU's turn at bat. The last few months we passed on the ability to conduct personnel administration reporting, and all its functions, to our "reach back" team at Mainside Camp Pendleton, I MEF Headquarters Group. The end state allows us to pool all the knowledge and experience of several reduced sections into one large section, allowing better control and notification to the reach back admin in the rear. The MEU Admin Office on ship is made up of each resident unit's administrators, your favorite command element Marines, the PAO, and the Headquarters Commandant. On to the good stuff... How are the Marines you ask?

The disc jockey duo, LCpl. Turntables" Marquez and Cpl. Mayer-Tucker are heading up the orders & travel section. Despite leading the first night crew, organizing and watching the office DVDs, they are busy searching every night on the Internet to prove to one and all that they are indeed related. Yes I did say DVD; thanks to the kindness of the Creator the Personnel Admin Office was bestowed a DVD machine. Why? We all think that it is because we have the most personnel assigned to a single 12' x 12' workspace,

'...we have the most personnel assigned to a 12 x 12 workspace...'

Capt. Blankenship, S-1

but Marquez is still holding that it was a parting gift from MGySgt. Pedé. Personnel admin and service records are being handled by LCpl. Boyler, known as the "bruiser" in the great state of New York. He is developing into a fine administrator, but if his witty comments could just keep him from getting into trouble... His partner in crime, LCpl. Harrison, is tackling all the command's general administration. Despite the loss of his maternal brother Ornelas, he is truly the Lone Star when it comes to his job. If he could have just played basketball, GySgt. Lamb would have adopted him. Speaking of basketball, the office pro, LCpl. Underwood, is sweating it out on the mess decks, scheduled to return in a month. If the staff sergeant can get him to use spellchecker, all will be fine. The office would not be complete without mention of LCpls. Thomas and Francis. Rumor has it that Francis really plans to become a U.S.



SSgt. Stephen Gude

The A-Team

Sergeants Dustin Herzog and Simon Lemay boost a fire team member through a window while Sgt. Cedania Payne provides security during training at the Military Operations in Urban Terrain Facility, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. The Marines are members of A Battery, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, deployed with 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).

citizen after float, this time, and he will star in the next X-Men movie beside Thomas, who the captain is casting as the notorious Cable. Ask a comic book fan! A warm welcome to SSgt. Graham, the new MEU Admin chief, who regrets missing the work-up (yeah, right), but is leading the nation's finest administrators. Finally the Captain. His daily battle against the evil Wiccans and the trolls is going well, if he would just stop talking to himself. A few push-ups for the lost and all is better...

Well that is all this time. In parting we would like to say hello and thanks to our favorite Wal-Mart greeter, GySgt. A.M. Lamb (USMC ret), for goodness sakes, breathe between puffs GySgt...

S-2 Intelligence

The S-2 section has begun settling into its new work space and living spaces aboard USS Tarawa. The section has spent a very busy first week at sea preparing for sustainment training in

please see SCOOP, Page 5

Hawaii, as well as follow-on operations and exercises for WESTPAC. The remainder of the Radio Battalion detachment, sent to Hawaii as part of the advance party, will rejoin the section when we arrive at Pearl Harbor, then the S-2 will once again be up to full strength. We are all looking forward to an interesting and successful deployment. All in the platoon send their warmest regards to friends and family back home.

S-3 Operations and Training

Captain Ellinger and his wife were blessed with a beautiful baby girl March 21, 2000, weighing in at a whopping 7 lbs. 14 oz. and measuring 21 1/4 inches in length. The proud parents named her Madelyn Hope.

Lance Cpl. Anthony Lopez, one of the S-3's Admin clerks, was promoted to his current rank as of Aug 1. Lance Cpl. Lopez just recently graduated from Ground Operations Specialist Course at EWTGLANT.

The Marines of the S-3 Section helped coordinate and supervise a very successful Navy/Marine Corps Family Day, Aug. 4.

Master Sgt. Lunday was recently married to the former Hanne Marie Del Signore at the General's Ranch House Chapel on July 1. Lieutenant Col. Andrew Schlaepfer escorted the bride down the aisle for the father, who was unfortunately unable to attend. Things went off



Cpl. Branden P. O'Brien photo

The Lundays and their puppy

without too many delays or problems. A couple of the notable items were as follows:

* Lieutenant Col. Schlaepfer's extreme nervousness both at the rehearsal and the wedding about walking down the aisle. You would've thought it was him getting married, but he made it through with flying colors.

* The ceremony started off and all was well until Chaplain Allan Ford got to the portion of the ceremony where he asked the Best Man (SSgt. Mark Mast) for the bride's wedding band. At that time he appeared to have lost, or we will say, *misplaced* it. He started patting himself down looking for the ring but to no avail. He informed the groom, who said "You had better find it!" He then looked toward the two rows of sword detail and asked if anyone has seen the ring. They all started patting themselves down, no joy yet, when SSgt. Eric Schmidt, one of the ushers, pulled out a bag of Cracker Jacks, opened it up and said, "Hey! There might be something in here." He started handing out Cracker Jacks to the other members of the sword detail, as well as LtCol. Schlaepfer. He finally made it up to the best man and

groom with the prize. All was well again. Everyone got a good laugh out of the little joke that the Groom and Best Man played on the Bride, however as Paul Harvey from the radio always says here's the rest of the story. Three guesses at who came up with the idea: 1) the Chaplain; 2) the Chaplain; or 3) the Chaplain?

But all in all things went well, the new Mrs. Lunday was welcomed into the Marine Corps family in the traditional way. As the new bride exited the Arch of Swords, the best man (SSgt. Mast) delivered a very stern swat to her bottom.

All the Marines from S-3 recently enjoyed a well-deserved leave. The Marines went to the winds, going home to see family and loved ones all over the country and the globe. Some just stayed in the local area, while others ventured to the Midwest, the Southwest, the East Coast and some even went over to Europe. All have returned safe and sound. They are now deployed on what is for most of them is their first WestPac, if not first deployment. All are adjusting well to being out at sea with nothing but water everywhere.

S-4 Logistics, Supply and Embarkation

After the leave block the S-4 turned back into high gear, moving a fleet of vehicles and personnel on the TARG in preparation for the long six-month deployment. Time has flown by and before we looked at the calendar, it was Monday morning, Aug. 14, and we were standing in formation on the hangar bay. This is when reality set in for most of us here. We stood watching our loved ones from the boat as we pulled away from the pier, and while most of us have had the enjoyment of deploying a few times, it is still hard to shake the feelings you get when you leave the ones you care most about. So instead of sitting around all depressed we turned to squaring away our areas on the ship, trying to make the deployment as comfortable as possible. TVs and video games came out of seabags and ALICE packs, and everyone's trying to find the best way to get them into their racks. Some of the more high-speed Marines had DVD players and computers but everyone had something that would help to take their mind off the deployment.

Even in the short time we have been on the boat there have been some historic events: Maj. Stout has only used foul language 10 times in the past hour and he seemed to be in one of his happier moods. He has also found a hair style that works for him — none at all. He said it was a bad hair cut but we know that he

just forgot to pack his spare toupee.

The Embark shop is moving right along. Coordinating with the world for the two days of sustainment training in Hawaii and trying to

figure out a way to make the work days shorter so they can get more libo.

MIMMS, well we still haven't figured out what they do, but it must be important because they are always exhausted, which hints why they are in the rack all the time.

Ammo has finally had the chance to take a break from things that go "boom." Getting all the ammo onboard proved to be a challenge; while working with our Navy counterparts is a great

**Historic Logistics Event:
Maj. Stout has only used
foul language 10 times in
the past hour...**

From the Homefront...

So how's everyone holding up so far? I think the major period of mourning is behind us—and it's full speed ahead. On the homefront, families are busy getting back from vacations and getting ready for school. As soon as we know it we'll be carving jack-o-lanterns; cooking that turkey (or how about just eating it—don't know about you—but I'm going to the messhall for my haute cuisine this year); putting up the tree—taking down the tree, trying desperately to take off the pounds after the holidays—and before we know it—it's all over, yeah!!!!

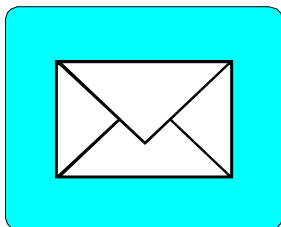
Okay, reality check here...it's only been a week ...

We might not be on the ship, but we are all in the same boat when it comes to being away from our loved ones. Now is the time to really bond together as a team and help each other over the hurdles that periodically come our way.

Your key volunteers are here to serve

Your key volunteer network is standing by to help you in any way that we can. If you are unsure who your key volunteer is, or if you are having any problems contacting her, please call me, Sylvia Landis.

We may not be miracle workers—but we have hearts of gold and a burning desire to help each other. Please don't be shy about contacting your KVN. I also need for you to e-mail me if you want to be included in receiving routine information via the Internet that might be of interest to you. If you have new email accounts, please contact me immediately. For those girlfriends, parents, extended family members, etc., that would also like to be



included in 13th MEU news, please email me with your Internet addresses.

Spiritual enrichment offered

We are currently seeking those who would like to get together every other week at 7 p.m. at the key volunteer center in Delmar area for spiritual enrichment. This is a non-denominational spiritual support network. Please call Michelle Ford to discuss a mutually decided upon night to meet.



Sylvia Landis
13th MEU KVN
Coordinator

Child care only a phone call away

To better serve our families, the key volunteers have established a co-op childcare network. If you desire periodic childcare, please call Leslie Manning as soon as you have a time and date you need childcare. Leslie will in turn match you up with another 13th MEU family member who will exchange childcare services.

September social function—please come

Our first monthly social function will be held Sept. 16 (Saturday) beginning at 11 a.m. at Lake O'Neil. We will be on the peninsula, otherwise known as the largest picnic area. This will be a picnic potluck, and we are asking all attendees whose last names end in A-G to bring a salad; H-M (cooked main entrée); N-S (casserole or chips); T-Z (dessert). This function is open to all

please see HOMEFRONT, Page 7

New bowling league is calling your name

Our 13th MEU Family Bowling League began Aug. 20—and guess what? You can still join in on the fun. To keep our league as user friendly as possible, we are encouraging family and friends of the 13th MEU to join the league at any time.

Unlike most leagues whose main emphasis is on competition, our league's mission is to provide a forum for fun, camaraderie and mutual support during the deployment between our families and friends.

The league costs each bowler \$7 a week (\$1 each week extra for shoe rental) and we begin bowling each Sunday at 5 p.m. at the Camp Pendleton Bowling Alley. This is a family league and we invite our school-aged children to bowl too. For our younger children, you are welcome to bring out the whole family. We even have certified childcare available at the bowling alley for \$2 an hour.

The beauty of this league is that if you miss a week or two—don't worry because, unlike other leagues, you don't have to pay for the weeks that you don't bowl. If you are strapped for cash—

just come out and share in the camaraderie of our unit family.

Many have said that they didn't join the league because "they weren't that good." Well come on down because most of our bowlers are beginners! We are all out here for fun and the bonus is that you will get better as the season progresses. The season will end Feb. 3 and we will not be bowling the last two Sundays in December.

The great thing about the league is that we have all our elements represented for some good-old fashioned bragging rites. So come on all you command element, MSSG, BLT and ACE families! Get the spirit and join our league. Please call Sylvia Landis with any questions or to sign-up.

The command element is having a special 'snack drive' for their single Marines and sailors. We are making a special request from our families to bring a snack to each of our monthly events, so we can box them up in care packages for our single folks on ship. You're also welcome to bring snacks anytime for drop off during the weekly bowling league. Thanks for your generosity.

Vision

from page 1

families back home are doing, and about their personal lives. But his focus is still on the mission of protecting our nation's interests abroad, with a small detachment of the world's finest fighting force.

One of his biggest concerns is keeping his Marines concentrating on the missions at hand. After the constant training of the pre-deployment work-ups, the Marines experience extended lulls in action while sitting aboard ship.

"We are like a football team that has had two-a-day practices for the last six months," he said. "Now we are done with our pre-season training and we get to rest between games. It is easy to take our minds off of the training and think about home. That is when mistakes happen. We need to stay focused and ready, because we are the ones on the tip of the forward deployed spear."

Gray

from page 2

* Set the example.

"One of the best things about him is that he leads by example in so many different ways," said LCpl. Jonathan Smith, a 25-year-old military policeman from Salem, Ore. "For instance, he is always squared away. He is always coming into work with perfectly shined boots and ironed cammies. I can't remember any time that I have seen him in a messy uniform or with a bad attitude."

* Train your Marines as a team.

"When we train as a platoon, no one is eliminated, especially any weak link," LCpl. Smith said. "He doesn't train around them. Everyone is included, the whole team. He never plays favorites."

'He is always trying to improve himself.'

**1st Lt. Johnny Gutierrez
Sgt. Gray's OIC**

* Make sound and timely decisions.

"He ran the detachment while me and his staff sergeant were on the rifle range," 1stLt. Gutierrez said. "He went to all the meetings and supervised loading our equipment on the ship. When he checked in with me, everything was done the way it should have been."

* Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.

"He is not afraid to admit that he makes mistakes," 1stLt.

Gutierrez said. "I also

don't have a problem with him repeating mistakes because he learns from them. He uses what he learns from past mistakes."

Fulfilling these and many other leadership traits and principles established by the Marine Corps, make him more than qualified to be and excel as a sergeant and leader of Marines.

Homefront

from page 6

13th MEU families to include the command element, MSSG, BLT. We also extend a special invitation to any members of the ACE that live aboard or near Camp Pendleton who would like to come.

Please RSVP to your key volunteer no later than Sept. 2 for the picnic. Please bring blankets, chairs or any other creature comforts that would facilitate your family. Beverages will be provided.

Until next time—sweet dreams and may the Lord keep all our families safe and sound...



Cpl. Branden P. O'Brien

'Hello, Operator? Can you hook me up to Camp Pendleton, please...'

Kid quips from the homefront

compiled by Sylvia Landis

Here are the first two...From the Manning household—*On one of those crazy days while Leslie was babysitting a couple of neighbor kids, one of them yells out "Leer (2) pee-pee'd her panties! She took them off and she's slapping us with them!"*

From the Landis homefront—*After Mom was trying to get the kids out the door to go to several places, Dee (4) said*

"So we're going to Aaron's house?" Mom replied, "Aaron? who's Aaron?" Brother Bud (9) states matter-of-factly, "Oh, she got mixed up when you said we had to go do errands."

Editor's Note: If you like this feature of the Letterneck, or would like to make a submission, let us know! E-mail SSgt.

Gude or 1st Lt. Landis at gudesb@13meu.usmc.mil or landisja@13meu.usmc.mil.

Ship Addresses

USS Tarawa
Rank/Name/USMC
13th MEU (section)
UIC 43608
FPO AP 96608-3608

USS Duluth
Rank/Name/USMC
13th MEU (section)
UIC 43608 Box 0036
FPO AP 96608-0036

USS Anchorage
Rank/Name/USMC
13th MEU (section)
UIC 43608 Box 0037
FPO AP 96608-0037

Scoop

from page 5

opportunity, the drive is still, well, NAVY.

Most of our Marines are getting their first opportunity to deploy on the ship for six months at a time, and they are also getting the chance to see what the wide open sea is like. A few have been to medical to get sea sick pills but for the most part they are trying to suck it up by laying in the rack with their plastic bags, trying to will the ship to stop rocking. The shades of green vary with skin color but they all have the look of someone who just ate something bad. Those of us who already have our sea legs tell them that the ship will stop rocking so much after we leave Hawaii but that is just so they have something to look forward to, the seas get nothing but worse from here.

Medical is as always on the eternal hunt for blood. Chief Catrucco said that last month would be the last of the shots we would have to receive — fat chance! He is still standing by, syringe in hand, waiting to draw blood. He hasn't even told us what he is injecting us with but he says that everything will be just fine. HMMMMMMM.

S-6 Data/Communications

The S-6 reports all is going well. Corporal Arriaga's wife has had a baby girl, and he stayed behind to be with his wife.

Corporal Arriaga will meet us in Hawaii. Corporal Stalling's wife had a baby girl before the MEU departed for WestPac. Sergeants Goulding and Mawson have been promoted to their present rank. Corporal Hall has been promoted to her present rank.

S-7 Headquarters Commandant

The S-7 is working hard to maintain a clean and safe environment aboard ship for the Marines — this poses a challenge with such a veteran ship. Days one and two gave a good majority of our Marines a touch of sea sickness, which passed in a short time. Corporal Delorenzo is working hard with the Combat Cargo unit getting the job done. Sergeant Brooks and Cpl. Shelton are on a constant mission with the ship's crew, ensuring that all berthing maintenance problems that affect our Marines are solved. Corporal Peroutka is exercising his expertise in the culinary arts, preparing quality food for our flag mess. All in all, the Marines are well prepared to deal with the deployment.

Public Affairs

When it comes to PAO, the question isn't, "What are you guys doing?" The question should be, "What AREN'T you guys doing?"

From storing gear to taking photos, from preparing public affairs guidance to dealing with MCCA (MWR) issues (yep, that stuff follows us even on the ship), from deciding who's going to cover what event to getting schooled on the latest digital gear, there's not a boring moment for the PAO bubbas. The list of things to do grows even as we check other things off, because at this point, our job is to let the world know what 13th MEU(SOC) is up to.

We have got to find a way to tap into Lt. Landis' source of energy, because he's like the energizer bunny — his motor never stops. Several times, Sgt. Miller and I have worked what we thought were long days, until the Landog announces there's yet more to do and we won't be going home

until, oh, *Easter*.

Heck, he'll have to write public affairs guidance on that evolution as well...

We're slightly worried about Sgt. Miller — he actually smiled the other day. A chink in the "nothing fazes me" armor Miller has? Or is he just happy that he and Tammy are expecting a sibling for young Joshua?

Congratulations to the Miller family.

Lieutenant Landis has already been inundated with e-mails from family members, and we have received several e-mails from Chief Polson, our Navy PAO counterpart aboard USS Tarawa. Everyone wants the ship's address, or the e-mail address of their spouses or have general questions. To help everyone concerned, we've provided the addresses to all the ships on page 7. To e-mail your loved one aboard the ship, simply use his or her last name and first and middle initials, followed by "@13meu.usmc.mil." For instance, if your loved one's name is Sgt. I.M. Marine, you'd type "marineim@13meu.usmc.mil."

However, the good thing about "snail mail," as we like to call the regular mail system, is that you can send goodies to your loved one, and he or she can share with everyone. For instance, if you sent, say, jelly beans to me, I'd be sure to share with everyone just how tasty they were. I also like pound cake, sports car magazines, and ...

... I'm off the subject. If you have any questions or comments about the Family Gram or any topic concerning the Marines with 13th MEU(SOC), simply e-mail me at gudesb@13meu.usmc.mil or use landisja@13meu.usmc.mil, which is on the web page. If we can't answer your questions, we will find the answer for you. Speaking of the web page, those of you who are trying to get your information on the MEU from the website, please be patient with us. We apologize for the delays in posting; we are currently working through problems posting information and photos, but rest assured, we will have the situation squared away soon. One of our biggest missions is to keep you informed, and given the talent of the team we have in place here, failure to do that is not an option. Keep checking the site daily for updates to photos and the current status of your 911 force — 13th MEU(SOC).

We are all looking forward to an exciting time on this float.

The Last Word



Cpl. Branden P. O'Brien

'Don't worry man... it'll still be there when we get back.'